SEVENTEENTH

ANNUAL ADDRESS

AND

REPORT

TO THE

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE,

BY

A. S. HALLIDIE, ESQ.

PRESIDENT,

DELIVERED AT THEIR ROOMS, JUNE 7TH, 1873.

SAN FRANCISCO:

B. F. STERETT, PRINTER, 532 CLAY STREET.

1873.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MECHANICS' INSTITUTE,

FOR THE

YEAR ENDING JUNE 1, 1873.

SAN FRANCISCO:

B. F. STERETT, PRINTER, 532 CLAY STREET.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT.

To the Members of the Mechanics' Institute:

GENTLEMEN,—I have the honor again to refer to matters in connection with the Mechanics' Institute, and to report the financial and general condition of the Society.

Societies, like human beings, have to pass through a period when the struggle for life becomes the subject of its sole care and aim, and, in spite of greatest care and best efforts, it is still a question of life and death, or its equivalent progress and stagnation.

Looking over the work done during the past year by your Society, it does not seem to me that the progress made has been in proportion to the progressive material possessed by it. It is true that the past experience of the Mechanics' Institute has been a lesson of caution, and has compelled a conservatism that perhaps would not otherwise have existed. So far it is well; but it cannot be denied, that the few efforts made by your Trustees have not been encouraged very heartily by the members at large. I believe the mission of the Mechanics' Institute is, to extend the best facilities for mental improvement at the least cost.

San Francisco is unfortunate in not possessing an unsectarian Library and Reading-Room free to the public. It is true, your Library and Reading-Room approaches this more nearly than any in the city, the membership fee being but half a dollar per month. A modest start might be made in establishing a Free Reading-Room and Library in the city; and who will be the first to take this under his immediate care and protection? Here is a field for the philanthropist. At the two ends of the city are Barbary Coast and Happy Valley; the former comprising the lower end of Pacific Street and vicinity, and the latter First Street and its vicinity. I think a modest Library with Reading-Room attached, and sufficient accommodation for the use of visitors,

might be established in both these places with good results ; with the addition of a Coffee-Room—the plan of the Holly Tree Coffee-Room, so well and successfully introduced in many of the Eastern cities, might be adopted. This would really beard the lion in his den, and, I doubt not, would find his ferocity consist mostly in his roar ; but there would be plenty of the gentler animals ready to give a helping hand, and save many a young man from wasting his time in the saloons of the vicinity. In any event, it is worth the trial ; and among our members, who are ready and willing to assist the enterprise ?

The Institute, in connection with the Board of Regents, presented the usual course of Winter Lectures, by the Professors in the University of California ; and went a step further, as an experiment and feeler, in attempting a sort of class tuition by lectures on Thursday evening of each week. This was simply intended to feel the pulse of the public, in order to see if this class of instruction was desirable. The effort was naturally crude ; but the results show that something of this kind is needed. Some classes were organized, the one under charge of Mr. Henry Hanks being highly satisfactory ; while the course of lectures given by Professor Neri, on the Spectroscope, were eminently successful. The valuable experience of the past season will enable better work to be done in future, in this particular line of instruction. The Institute is, however, without apparatus and other facilities for demonstration and experiment, which are essential for lectures on chemistry and physics in connection with the industrial arts and sciences. By the charge of a nominal fee—namely, $1—for a course of fourteen lectures, the absolute expenses of the lectures were met; but for a successful course there should be a fund of, say, $2,500 per annum ; which, together with a suitable scientific apparatus, would justify engaging eminent lecturers who could popularize these special subjects, and, I think, firmly establish the practice, so that eventually it might be made to pay its way.

San Francisco City is the place for this class of education, and liberal-minded gentlemen of means, feeling the need of it here, will aid in due time in placing a system on a firm foundation. You have a nucleus in this Institute around which can be gathered the various contributions that will, I believe, in time found a School of Science in this city.

The educational outlook is certainly a pleasant one, and the gifts and donations to the State University are a gratifying evi-

dence of the appreciation in which it is held by the best citizens of this State. It was my intention to enumerate the various gifts which were made, during the past year, in the cause of science and education in this State ; but I found the number so far beyond my expectation, that time prevents me from more than referring to a few of them. The State University has been fortunate in having many good friends who, during the past year, have practically shown their good-will to it by substantial aid : for instance, the Library of the late Dr. Lieber, given by Mr. Michael Reese ; the Voy Geological and Mineralogical Collection, given by Mr. D. O. Mills ; the lot and building of the Toland Medical College, the gift of Dr. Toland ; and very many others—all attest the esteem in which the University of California is held. Again, the Academy of Science has been the recipient of a most generous gift by Mr. James Lick, which will undoubtedly place that invaluable society on a firm basis, and be a lasting benefit to the people of San Francisco. Mr. James Lick's generosity has not stopped here, but to the Pioneer Association of this city he has again extended a helping hand, in deeding to it an exceedingly valuable building lot.

The Art Association, of this city, a young and flourishing society, is doing a good work in an effective manner, due principally to the untiring and well-directed efforts of its President, our worthy Mayor, William Alvord. This society has held three Art Exhibitions, which have delighted the San Francisco public, and demonstrated the skill and genius of resident artists. It has material on the way from Europe for the establishment of a School of Design, and it is expected that by January next this school will be inaugurated.

While there is pleasure in the consideration of the above facts, we must not forget that San Francisco has also dark shades in it, that are depressing as the foregoing are elevating. For instance, let us consider the *corner groceries*, spread all over the city—necessities and conveniencies—and consequently, if used for improper purposes, the more dangerous. As a rule, these groceries have back-rooms, or, as a substitute, have a portion of the store separated from the main room by a partition of boxes, behind which, every evening, and sometimes during the day, are found young men, often mere boys, playing cards, drinking, and smoking. I believe that more real harm is done in these unsuspected places than in those haunts that are known to be vile and

criminal, and that they tend to give form to the genus hoodlum more than any other cause; certainly, together with the low standard of the drama in this city and the presence of numerous dance-cellars, entice the young men to fast life and loose morals. All this, however, can undoubtedly be regulated, if the proper care and influence is exercised in the home—a *true home* being *first provided.*

The public school is the true safeguard; it is the bulwark of our national strength and liberty; without it the ship of State would be without a rudder, if not without a keel. Compulsory education I look on as a necessity—necessary medicine the State administers to its sick patients, preventing the contagion of crime, and placing its prospective citizen in a healthy condition. The guardians of the public schools are the protectors of our liberties. They should appreciate their responsibility, and, as a board of directors, should be broad in principle, honest in thought, dignified and gentlemanly in council.

I do not think pupils should be overburdened with tasks, but they should learn well. Those of maturer age—say from sixteen to nineteen, should have facilities for learning trades; all should be impressed with the necessity of this, and at some future time this should be required of all those who are constitutionally able to learn a trade. I do not think this could be connected directly with the public school system, as it now stands; because, to learn a trade, a boy must be apprenticed or bound for a period of years; and when that education is completed, should be entitled to such a certificate from the examiners that would be of value to him. In addition to the consideration of literary education, a mechanical education entails serious loss in tools, material, and labor, which the later years only of an apprentice's skill can compensate for.

The Mechanical Schools should be adjuncts to the Public Schools; as complete in its system as that of the Public Schools. It should not be a school of punishment, but a school of recompense; its diploma, being a guarantee of excellence, should be sought after. Such a school, doubtless, would not pay its expenses; and if not established by the State, as I think it ought to be, would have to be supported by liberal contributions, which I doubt not would be forthcoming. The importance of this I have before referred to in my reports, and it is to be hoped that

it will receive the attention of the earnest men and mechanics in our midst.

The suggestions recently made as to the propriety of having a Training-Ship in our harbor, is of the utmost value. Such a provision for reform would be more effectual than the Industrial School; and while it would work the redemption of the many wayward youths of this city and State, it would also furnish a supply of good seamen to the navy—helping, in a small way, to lift our marine a much-needed grade higher. Under the management and discipline of a first-class United States naval officer, this proposed training-ship could do effective moral and physical good; and it would be a cheap institution of reform for the State to establish and maintain, at any cost. If, then, it is a good plan, let those in charge of it push it forward to a successful termination; and let us, toward this end, give them effective aid.

The Vienna Industrial Exhibition, as you are aware, opened last May. Efforts were made to induce a good representation from this State, without success. Your accredited representative, Mr. Guido Kustel, is there, obtaining all the information possible in the mining and mechanical department, and will report the result to you on his return to this city. The scandal relating to the American Commissioners is exceedingly unfortunate and humiliating, and is felt so by every American jealous of his country's fair fame.

The Commissioners of the Centennial Exhibition to be held in Philadelphia in 1876, are doing all in their power to successfully inaugurate this Exhibition; and California, it is to be hoped, will aid in the great national celebration.

Your Trustees have been considering the matter of the next Industrial Exhibition, to be held in this city by the Mechanics' Institute; and if arrangement can be made for the ground, it is believed that in August, 1874, such an exhibition should be held. I think it would be well for you to determine, in the event of satisfactory arrangements being made to obtain the necessary ground, whether it would be advisable to hold an Industrial Fair at that time.

By resolution of the members, the time of holding the Quarterly Meeting was changed from Thursday to the first Saturday after the first Tuesday of the month. I would suggest that the Annual Meeting be held on the first Saturday after the first Tues-

day of June of each year, instead of the first Thursday, as now required to be held.

I think, also, that the fee required for Life Membership is too small. I think no similar society in this city charges less than $100; and I would respectfully ask, if it would not be well to place your life membership at the same price?

The Library Rooms are closed by 10 P.M. on Saturdays; while the Reading and Chess Rooms remain open until 10.30. After 10 o'clock, there are but few occupants of the Reading and Chess Rooms -- not enough to pay for the consumption of gas, or to justify the retention of the Librarian and assistants. The Trustees desire to ascertain the feeling of the members on that point; and I would suggest, that if in accord with your views, the whole building be closed by 10 P.M. on Saturdays hereafter.

There have been added to the Library, during the past year, 1,256 volumes, classified as follows:

Fiction	605	Political Economy	71
Science and Art	246	Wit and Humor	11
General Literature	104	Poetry	23
Travel	52	Philosophy and Theology	12
History	68	Dictionaries	11
Biography	34	Directories	3
Law	12	Miscellaneous	4

Total in your Library at this date, 18,495.

The number of members who have joined the Society during the year is 425; withdrawn, 379; showing a gain of 46 members.

The Financial condition of the Society for the year ending 31st May, 1873, is as follows:

Institute Fund.

RECEIPTS.

Rents	$6,967 00	
Dues—membership, etc.	6,034 20	
Transferred from special fund	800 00	
Sale of pulleys	212 00	
Total Receipts		$14,013 20

DISBURSEMENTS.

Insurance	$341 00
Interest	499 92
Books	2,265 76
Newspapers	1,022 44
Advertising	140 00
Furniture and supplies	473 25
	$4,742 37

Brought forward	$4,742 37	
Petty cash—books, etc.	984 08	
Water	216 00	
Gas	1,142 87	
Improvements and Repairs	1,242 72	
Printing	110 50	
Bookbinding	640 00	
Sinking Fund	1,401 28	
Salaries	4,140 00	
Sundries	195 10	
Balance due Treasurer, May 31, 1873	269 84	
Total	$15,084 76	
Due Treasurer this date		$1,071 56
Amount to balance		$15,084 76

Sinking Fund.

RECEIPTS.

Balance on hand May 31, 1872	$1,606 16	
Ten per cent. of Receipts for the year	1,401 28	
		$3,007 44

DISBURSEMENTS.

City and county real estate tax	$1,200 00	
" " personal tax	150 00	
		1,350 00
May 31, 1873—Balance in Treasury		$1,657 44

The assets and liabilities of the Society are as follows:

ASSETS.

Lot and building, Post Street	$115,000 00	
Library	25,000 00	
Fixtures and furniture	6,000 00	
Cash on hand—Sinking Fund	1,657 44	
Cash in Librarian's hands	141 70	
Dues unpaid and collectable	400 00	
Special fund—life membership	850 00	
Total Assets		$149,049 14

LIABILITIES.

Balance due on mortgage	$5,000 00	
Due Treasurer—cash advanced	1,071 56	
Due special Life Membership Fund	800 00	
Bills audited but not paid	942 48	
Bills not audited	121 00	
Total Liabilities		7,935 04
Net Assets		$141,114 10

By referring to the Report for 1872, it will be seen that there is a gain of $909.57 in the assets of the Society.

The disbursements, as compared with the receipts for the year, show an excess of $801.72; to which must be added the items

$212 and $800 of receipts from sales of pulleys and from special life membership fund—this latter being a *loan*—making a total excess of expenses over our regular revenue of $1,813.72.

Our present monthly revenue is as follows:

From rents	$625 00
" membership dues	503 00
Total	$1,128 00

The building is reported in good repair, and not likely to need any outlay on it for some time.

The large number of 74,676 volumes were taken out from the Library by the members. This speaks *volumes* for the popularity of the Library.

To the members and officers of this Institute I tender my sincere thanks for their courtesy and kindness during the past year. The great desire of all concerned has been to advance the interests of this Society, and through it the interests of society.

A. S. HALLIDIE, *President.*

San Francisco, June 7, 1873.